

Message Text

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FOR SCHAUFLE FROM WISNER

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SUBJ: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: BRITISH NOV 7 CONSULTATIONS
ON INDEPENDENCE DATE

1. IVOR RICHARD AND THE BRITISH DELEGATION MET DURING THE COURSE OF THE DAY WITH EACH OF THE NATIONALIST DELEGATIONS THE FRONT LINE OBSERVERS. IN THEIR CONSULTATIONS THE BRITISH STOOD BY THEIR POSITION ON A DATE OF INDEPENDENCE AND WORKED TO ESTABLISH THE PRINCIPLE THAT A FIXED DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE SET TO COINCIDE WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE NECESSARY LEGAL PROCESSES. IN SHORT INDEPENDENCE COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHIN 15 MONTHS AFTER THE END OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THE BRITISH CONTINUE TO MAKE THE POINT THAT BOTH THE NATIONALISTS AND THE RHODESIAN DELEGATION COULD RESERVE THEIR POSITIONS AND ACCEPT 15 MONTHS AS A TARGET DATE.

2. SITHOLE TOLD RICHARD THAT HE PREFERRED A 12 MONTH PERIOD BUT SAID THAT THE CONFERENCE COULD GO ON IF THE QUESTION OF A DATE IS NOT RESOLVED. HE INDICATED THAT HE WISHED THE RHODESIANS WOULD CONFIRM A 15 MONTH PERIOD OF TRANSITION.

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3. THE BRITISH MET SEPARATELY WITH MUZOREWA'S SECOND-

IN-COMMAND GABELLAH. GABELLAH SAID THAT HE THOUGHT A 15 MONTH PERIOD WAS REASONABLE; BUT IN THE BISHOP'S MEETING WITH THE BRITISH, MUZOREWA UNDERCUT HIS SUBORDINATE AND SAID THAT HE WOULD STAND BY 12MONTHS.

4. THE MEETING WITH NKOMO AND MUGABE PRODUCED NO RESULTS. AFTER AN EXTENDED AND OCCASIONALLY HEATED DISCUSSION, NKOMO AND MUGABE SAID THAT THEY WOULD ACCEPT 12 MONTHS OR NOTHING AND WOULD NOT AGREE TO CONSIDER ANY FURTHER ISSUES UNTIL THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE HAD BEEN RESOLVED. NKOMO AND MUGABE RHETORICALLY ARGUED THAT THEIR INSISTENCE ON A SHORTER PERIOD OF TRANSITION WOULD ELIMINATE FURTHER "DYING AND SUFFERING." THEY CHARGED THE BRITISH WERE STANDING BY 15 MONTHS ONLY TO "SAVE FACE." THEY ALSO ARGUED THAT THE BRITISH WERE TRYING TO PLEASE SMITH BY CONFIRMING A DATE MORE FAVORABLE TO SMITH THAN TO THE NATIONALISTS(WHICH IS NOT TRUE) AND SAID, UNCONVINCINGLY, THE LOGIC OF THE BRITISH POSITION MUST LIE IN THE FACT THAT SMITH HAD AGREED TO MAJORITY RULE WITHIN TWO YEARS AND SINCE THE NATIONALISTS WERE ARGUING FOR 12 MONTHS, BRITAIN WAS TAKING SMITH'S SIDE.

5. THE OBSERVERS, WHO HAD A LENGTHY MEETING WITH RICHARD DURING THE EVENING OF NOVEMBER 7, DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE COORDINATED THEIR POSITIONS BEFORE THEIR ARRIVAL. THE DISCUSSION TURNED INTO A "TOWER OF BABEL"; BUT UNLIKE MUGABE AND NKOMO, THE OBSERVERS APPEARED TO ATTACH GREATER SIGNIFICANCE TO A MOVE ON SMITH'S PART THAN THEY DID TO THE BRITISH CHANGING THEIR POSITION.

6. RICHARD HAS NO MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 8 BUT HAS TOLD EACH DELEGATION HE IS AVAILABLE FOR ANY SESSIONS THEY WISH TO REQUEST. THE SITUATION, IN RICHARD'S JUDGMENT, WILL TURN ON WHAT NKOMO AND MUGABE DECIDE. DENNIS GRENNAN WHO RETURN ON NOVEMBER 8, WILL UNDERTAKE TO FIND OUT AT A LOWER LEVEL WHAT IS THE DIRECTION OF NKOMO'S AND MUGABE'S THINKING.

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7. COMMENT: THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 7 WERE INCONCLUSIVE. THE BRITISH ARE WAITING TO FIND OUT IF SMITH WILL MOVE FROM HIS INSISTENCE ON 23 MONTHS TO A POSITION CLOSER TO THAT WHICH THE BRITISH HAVE ADVANCED. MEANWHILE RICHARD INTENDS TO STAND FIRMLY ON THE BRITISH 15 MONTH PROPOSAL AND THEREBY TRY TO CALL NKOMO'S AND MUGABE'S BLUFF. RICHARD INTENDS TO CONDUCT A JOINT ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION

WITH US BEFORE HE TAKES ANY NEW STEP.CATTO

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